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ABSTRACT

Because the community college is young, unencumbered by years of tradition, and clearly on the front line of educational reform, it has a unique opportunity to assume a leadership role in a number of ways. First, the 2-year institutions should initiate a more intensive dialogue with senior colleges and universities with regard to the transfer of academic and career-related credits. Second, community colleges should encourage senior institutions to take a page from their book in recruiting professional staff who have had work experiences. Third, both junior and senior colleges need to work more closely with high schools, particularly with their guidance counselors, to steer students into pre-college courses that mesh more systematically with their own post-secondary offerings in the academic and career fields students expect to enter. Fourth, both two- and four-year colleges should reach out to the community with continuing education programs that serve the total population. (JS)

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CAREER EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP*

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It is good to be home again. I count it a very distinct privilege to be invited here for this important occasion, as the people of these friendly and familiar Northeastern Connecticut communities come together to celebrate the investiture of a leader in education, and in so doing, to celebrate themselves for having brought higher education to this Valley. As one who grew up among these friendly hills and streams, I continue to think of this place as home, and I expect that many of my companions who grew up here and found their way to other parts of the land feel the same. Mrs. Marland and I expect to return someday, and with that in mind we still have the old family place in Hampton.

The Quinebaug Valley has had its economic ups and downs over the years. I recall the stern days of the Depression and the periodic times of disappointment when one industry or another found that it had to suspend its work and locate elsewhere. And I recall the diligence with which citizens turned their energies to attracting new industry so that the Valley became a place of industrial and agricultural diversification. But despite the ups and downs, the real strength of this Valley is its people. My grandfathers from both sides were in the woolen-textile industry, one bringing his craft with him from England as an

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*At the installation convocation for President Robert E. Miller, Quinebaug Valley Community College, Danielson, Connecticut, held at Annhurst College, Woodstock, Connecticut, April 8, 1972, 2:30 p.m.

immigrant, and both of them drew upon the abundant water power of the Quinebaug as they practiced their textile craft. And there were the Scots, the Poles, the Jews from a number of lands, the Italians, the French-speaking Canadians, a few Germans, and the proud Greeks. Among the joys I recall as a lad were the occasions at Easter, when our church was a gathering place for all the faiths. This Valley has been a place of a truly integrated America, and if it has not flourished as a great economic center of the land, it has more importantly flourished as a place of industrious and talented individuals who have made their communities happy places.

The word "Quinebaug" birngs to mind other pleasant thoughts as well --- swimming, against the parental rules, at the old sandbank at the bend of the Oxbow; gathering wild grapes in a leaky rowboat after the first frost of October has turned the wild vines golden and the grapes a powdery maroon, and returning with buckets loaded for the grape juice and jelly making that would follow. This was a time also for boyhood friendships that remain today, sustaining the names bearing their proud ethnic identifications. It is a great joy to see so many friends in this audience and to greet warmly even classmates from the years of the 20's and 30's. Robert Frost, in his no-nonsense poetry, said:

"Home is the place where,
When you have to go there,
They have to take you in."

And so be it. I feel well taken in.

I know of no more compelling reason to come back than the opportunity this convocation presents. For we are formally inaugurating an educational enterprise of great promise and installing as its first president a man who has the wisdom, the vision, and tenacity to deliver on that promise.

Quinebaug Valley Community College is a testimonial to the power of concerned people, behaving responsibly. Active citizen support for a regional community college in northeastern Connecticut dates back to 1946. Those early efforts were revitalized when the State legislature passed enabling legislation in the late '60s. But the college was able to open its doors last fall largely because school and civic leaders from 12 communities --- together with industry representatives, regional planners, and Governor Meskill and his associates at the State level --- joined forces to make it happen. That is indeed a tribute to community and State foresight, determination, and cooperation, and I am proud I come from such Connecticut stock.

In choosing Robert Miller to lead the college through its fledgling years, the Board of Trustees has picked a man who has devoted his career to higher education in Connecticut, who knows its problems and sees its great potential. Apart from his academic credentials and administrative experience, Dr. Miller has some versatile career skills. I understand, for instance, that during his first weeks in office he served both as President and secretary to the President, making policy decisions at his desk,

then moving over to a typing table to pound out the final copy. He likewise makes the most of the talents of others. I'm told the mathematics instructor also teaches a class in yoga. It's clear that your president has the necessary versatility for community college leadership.

This occasion in this locale reminds me of another pragmatic man from another time --- another Quinebaug Valley educator born in East Killingly, a Yale student, later an eminent educator and philosopher, also holder of the longevity record in the position I now occupy. I refer to William Torrey Harris, who served for 17 years as U.S. Commissioner of Education --- 1889 to 1906. I can assure you that anyone who survived that long in this job had to be doing most things right.

An afternoon in the archives of the Office of Education searching the years of Harris' stewardship can be an education in itself. What issues faced the education community of this land nearly a century ago? His annual report to Congress for 1890 cites juvenile delinquency and truancy; alcohol and tobacco abuse; the need for pension plans for professors; better training for teachers; more money for schools. If this sounds familiar, it indeed speaks to the same topics to be found in my annual report for 1971. We are still wrestling with the same issues, plus, of course, a host of newer ones.

To those of you interested in the laws of chance, you might try to calculate the odds on two out of 19 Commissioners of

Education over 120 years coming from the same home town -- and not a very big home town at that.

Apart from the proximity of birthplace and the similarities in public service, however, my reason for mentioning Commissioner Harris is that he represented the kind of educator --- promoting the kind of education --- we need even more today. He had an incisive mind that could probe the most profound theoretical questions of pedagogy and philosophy. His academic credentials were beyond question. In later life he even became editor-in-chief of Webster's International Dictionary.

At the same time, this son of the Quinebaug Valley displayed a stubborn realism about problems that affect the day-to-day lives of people. As Commissioner, for example, he was responsible for education in Alaska, but the educational needs of the Eskimos in the territory were overshadowed, to say the least, by the fact that many of them were starving. Commercial hunters had decimated the whale and walrus herds, the traditional sources of food in the far North. While promoting academic schooling for the Eskimo children, Harris sent an expedition to Siberia to purchase reindeer, started the domesticated herds in Alaska, and set up stations to train young Eskimos in herd management and care.

You might say Commissioner Harris was one of the first educators to stress essential skills training in this venture in vocational agriculture, along with sound academic preparation. That comes pretty close to Career Education as I would define it today ---

education that prepares one to think and to care about social responsibility and personal intellectual fulfillment, but education that also equips all learners, at whatever age, with satisfying and rewarding competencies for entering the world of work in the field of one's choice.

If some future scholar undertakes to assess my term as Commissioner of Education, I hope he will record that Sid Marland did everything in his power to encourage, to stimulate, and to support the reforms needed in our schools and colleges so that every young person, at whatever level he or she leaves formal education, leaves it with a specific and consciously determined career goal and the skills with which to reach that goal. I hope he can further report that I had a hand in the successful launching of Career Education all across the Nation for that is indeed my number one aim as Commissioner. I know of no greater service I can perform for the young people of the country or, for that matter the not-so-young, than to help them achieve career competence. The community college movement in the United States, of which Quinebaug Valley College is a clear symbol, stands at the very center of the career education concept.

In view of the financial crisis in education on the one hand, and the legitimate expectations of young people in an affluent society on the other, I think our schools and colleges must stand accountable for the career orientation and liberalizing academic preparation of all students as part of their systematic

learning and development.

I see no conflict in these related goals -- occupational development and intellectual development. Our society until now seems to have driven these two equally respectable objectives to opposite corners. Student interest in mathematics or social studies or foreign languages should flow naturally into career explorations based on these academic courses. Career Education, at all levels of schooling and certainly at the community college level, is not an either/or proposition. It is not a matter of sacrificing thorough academic preparation for skills in computer technology or automotive mechanics. Conversely, it does not simply train students in marketable skills at the expense of the intellectual and problem-solving abilities that come with enlightening study of psychology, philosophy, literature, and the theoretical sciences. Career Education is a fabric of academic and occupational goals so closely woven that the separate threads compose a harmonious and mutually supportive pattern.

One of the very grave problems I face in Washington is the ever rising cost of education at all levels, and the search for means to bring greater productivity to the enterprise, whether the student exits the system with a high school diploma or a graduate degree. We must prove the soundness of the investment. On the average, the Nation now spends $12,000 to send each student through elementary and secondary school, another $2,200 for a two-year community college program, an additional $3,000-$4,000 if he goes on for a baccalaureate, and several thousand more for

one or more graduate degrees. That's big money in anyone's book at 15-20,000 per person. Our current rate of expenditure for all levels of education is about $85 billion a year. Yet too many young people, from high school graduate to PhD, are discovering that the years and dollars invested in education do not correlate with earning power or job satisfaction in the marketplace. Too many of them are working below their ability level, not working at all, or merely existing in a career in one field, having found too late that their real interest lay in some other area. Two and one-half million young Americans leave school every year, neither schooled nor skilled.

I think this tells us that our present system of education falls short of social and fiscal accountability to the students, the parents and other taxpayers, and to its own professional integrity. Technology with all its new career options changed the rules on us a decade or more ago, but education is just beginning to catch up with the new reality.

In this regard, the community college movement is considerably ahead of the field, I think, because, like its student body, it is young, vigorous, and willing to try the untried. The community college experts on my staff tell me that 2-year institutions now offer 16,000 separate courses, with 4,000 new ones on the drawing boards each year, and that their subjects range from the most esoteric to the most functional, from theoretical art forms to basic human services. A parti-

cularly encouraging aspect of this curriculum explosion is that academic and career-related courses are so often taught under one aegis. The "we" and "they" separation of academic faculty and students from vocational faculty and students hasn't taken hold in community colleges as it did long ago in other segments of education, notably in our high schools, and most certainly in our universities.

Because the community college movement is young, unencumbered by years of tradition, and clearly on the front line of educational reform, I believe it has a unique opportunity --- an obligation actually --- to assume a leadership role in a number of ways.

-- First, I believe the two-year institutions should initiate a more intensive dialogue with senior colleges and universities with regard to the transfer of academic and career-related credits. In my judgment it is ludicrous for a student to lose credit when he transfers to a four-year engineering school for some of the junior college work that has already qualified him as an engineering technician. In this connection, I think the two-year colleges as well as the four-year institutions need to take a hard look at the whole matter of credit for work experience. A young person who has spent four years as a hospital aide before entering college to study to become a paramedic certainly has experience and insights that should count toward an associate degree. The College Entrance Examination Board is now exploring

this whole subject of credit for work, and I would like to see the community colleges take the initiative in carrying out the Board's recommendations. The term for this concept is the performance credential.

In a related move, the Office of Education is cooperating with the American Council of Education to set up a national committee to study the feasibility of a nationwide Credit Bank that would allow students to transfer without credit-hour loss from any participating college in the country to any other. This is also a step in the right direction. It follows the theme of the University Without Walls and seeks to put institutional exclusivity and snobbery out of style.

-- Second, I would like to see community colleges encourage senior institutions to take a page from their book in recruiting professional staff. While I have heard of only one community college where the mathematics instructor teaches yoga on the side, I do know that many of them recruit instructors directly from industry, and it is this kind of practical know-how, coupled with the necessary theory, that we need in senior as well as junior institutions. Who knows more about computer science that the men and women who design and build and successfully operate computers for a living? Who can teach inertial navigation more effectively than an industrial engineer who helped to develop the system? Who can teach the para-professional in law better than a nearly practicing attorney?

I recognize that this proposition requires a major new commitment on the part of commerce and industry and individuals who would be willing to devote part of their careers to preparing young people for theirs. But 4-year colleges and universities also have to be prepared to waive advanced degree and other requirements in order to utilize the special talents and qualifications of such people.

-- Third, it seems to me that both junior and senior colleges need to work more closely with high schools, particularly with their guidance counselors, to steer students into pre-college courses that mesh more systematically with their own postsecondary offerings in the academic and career fields students expect to enter. This has to do in part with the repetition of academic course work as well as occupational preparation. No wonder students become frustrated and disenchanted when the principles of geometry or history or English or architectural drafting or commercial skills they learned in high school are presented in much the same fashion with the same scope and purpose in their freshman college year.

-- Fourth, I would like to see both two-year and four-year colleges, particularly the community colleges, reach out to the community with continuing education programs that serve the total population. Continuing education for the adult population is another central purpose of the Career Education concept. I

see it as an extension of the concept that goes beyond the preparation of young people, to include mature citizens --- the out-of-work Cuban refugee, the underemployed city dweller, the migrant farm worker, the housewife, the retired couple, the under-utilized human being at whatever age. We need to remember that helping people find fulfillment is what education is all about.

As I have rambled over my personal recollections of friends and places in the Danielson area, and shared my deep convictions and biases about the place of the community college in American society, one would think that I had forgotten the principal purpose in our being here today. Our purpose is to inaugurate Robert E. Miller as the first President of Quinebaug Valley Community College. He brings to his task a distinguished record as a scholar and educator, as well as the birthright we have in common as Connecticut Yankees. He was born in Guilford and raised in Madison, and he holds three degrees from the University of Connecticut. One never knows how one gets to be a college president, and as I have reflected upon the theory and practice of Career Education, one would hardly find it likely to be a considered and calculated career goal for any man or woman in the growing years, yet Robert Miller would indeed seem to have had a plan. His undergraduate work was in political science and history, and what better equipment is there for a college president than these, unless it be advanced fund raising? He

performed his graduate studies in the field of administration of higher education, and has published respectably in this field.

Apart from his academic credentials, he brings to his post the reality of a successful career in business, having served as an executive with the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company.

He then turned to what clearly has been the path that has led him here today. In 1960, and for eight years or more thereafter, he served on the administrative staff at the University of Connecticut, his duties including the Division of Student Personnel, coordination of the Men's Affairs unit and fraternity affairs, adviser to foreign students, counselor to student government, and membership in academic committees. From this he moved to the State Commission for Higher Education where his duties included licensure, accreditation, scholarship programs, and teacher grants --- certainly timely and appropriate to his duties here. More recently, he has serve as Associate Academic Officer of the Board of Trustees of the State's Regional Community College system. And finally, to culminate his preparation, he served as the Acting Administrative Head and Dean of another community college in our State, South Central Community College in New Haven. It might even be noteworthy that in the preparation that Robert E. Miller has made for his present important post has been the avocation of bee-keeping,

and I trust that he is well equipped in the techniques that will keep from being stung.

I do indeed, Bob Miller, applaud you upon this occasion, and I applaud the citizens of Quinebaug Valley who have had the vision to create this institution and to invite you here as their leader. In many ways, as I look from my post in Washington, I envy you. I envy you the excitement, the opportunities for creativity, the joys of flexibility and freedom that I think you will find in the institution that you are building. Eighty odd years ago, our predecessor and neighbor, William Torrey Harris, said:

> The inventor in any field of reality can never be exhausted, but the practical man must act. When he acts he must stop investigating further and sum up the case. He must declare the evidence to be all in and decide what to do from what he has already learned.

I believe that Robert Miller will be an inventor as well as a practical man, and that he will not always wait until the evidence is in before he decides what to do. For in education the evidence is never wholly in. The college in America is two things if it is a good college. It is a place where man's intellectual archives are held firm, and the truths and values of civilization are scrutinized and digested and transmitted. But it is also a place of dynamism and responsiveness. It is a place that is never wholly invented, and I think it is

especially true that the community college, youngest in the educational spectrum, will never be wholly invented. Men like Robert Miller, over the years, will hammer out an increasing definition of what education for all the people is and what it should be. What better place than this Valley for finding new truths, for finding new ways to serve society through this institution, for finding new ways to bring fulfillment to the hearts and minds of all people? Dr. Miller and those who have brought Quinebaug Valley Community College into being, I salute you.

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